



**CITY OF LINCOLN**  
**NEBRASKA**

**MAYOR COLEEN J. SENG**



**For more information about other community development projects in Lincoln, contact the City's Urban Development Department, at 402-441-7606 or email: [urbandev@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:urbandev@lincoln.ne.gov)**

The Mayor's Community Development Task Force presents...

# The Sunken Gardens

Nominated for Lincoln's

## 2006 Community Development Week Award

The Sunken Gardens, at 27th Street and Capitol Parkway, is a nationally-known and locally-loved park. As the park reached its 73rd year in 2004, issues of safety, accessibility, and increased maintenance were becoming community concerns. Renovation was needed, but it would be costly.

Happily, renovation of the Sunken Gardens was completed in 2005, thanks to extensive community support. The total cost of the project was \$1.7 million. The City committed \$100,000 in funds from the Capital Improvement Program each year for two years. An initial \$536,000 was donated by individuals, foundations and businesses. The remaining \$1 million was successfully raised by appealing to the public for donations.

Renovations included a new handicapped-accessible entrance, an entry pavilion, a restored cascading water feature, new sculptural elements, restrooms, maintenance storage, renovated lily pools, an automated irrigation system and lighting. To inform visitors about the Garden's rich history as a Depression era project, elements and interpretive information were incorporated into the design.

Perhaps one of the reasons the Sunken Garden is so loved locally is that no admission fee is charged. This is unusual for a display garden of this quality. It makes the Sunken Gardens accessible to everyone in the community, including a broad range of ages and ethnicities.

The Near South Neighborhood Association was actively involved in developing the plan for the renovation project, and assisted in fundraising. Not only is the neighborhood proud of the Garden, they also appreciate how it anchors property values, and increases interest in home ownership within the neighborhood.

Some of the improvements have taken the Gardens beyond displaying annual flowers and plants. It will now be more of a "four season" garden. More than 1,000 new trees and shrubs were planted focusing on providing color and interest in all seasons. The first annual winter holiday lighting display occurred in Sunken Gardens this year. There will be a display of about 13,000 flowering bulbs in the spring.



Three new pieces of public art have also been added: "Rebekka at the Well" by Nebraska artist David Young, "Reveille" for former Nebraskan Wayne Southwick, and the "Four Seasons" dome of the Rotary Pavillion by architect Jeffrey Chadwick.